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THE Rev. J. C. Street begs to acknowledge receipt of the following amounts in aid of the gratuitous publication of the *Chronicle and Index*:—

Liberal Christian Union,	...	£30	19	3
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Further contributions are needed and will be gladly acknowledged.

THE month just ended has been a pleasantly busy one for many of our Sunday Schools. They have journeyed to beautiful places in the country and by the coast, and had their fill of happiness during the sunny days of their excursions. We have heard of the trips of Hopeton Street, Stanhope Street, and Mountpottinger, Belfast; and of Comber, Rademon, and Moneyrea. Doubtless there have been many others of which we are ignorant, but we trust that they all had good and happy times.

THE Unitarians of London are bestirring themselves. Until a very recent period all the progress connected with liberal religion seemed to be confined to the North of England, but of late a new spirit has been at work in the South, and London is beginning to take the lead. This is as it should be. With Essex Hall devoted to liberal work, the new church which grew out of it hard at work in its proper sphere, and the various new churches in progress in different parts of the metropolis, we see evidence of a new and earnest life which is most encouraging. The laying of the foundation stone of the new church at Bermondsey is a pleasant sign of the growth now going on.

THE *Christian Register* says:—"To our orthodox friends who are oscillating between

future probation and natural light in regard to the destiny of the heathen, we commend the words of Socrates to his judges: 'There can no evil befall a good man, whether he be alive or dead.' If this is true at all, it is just as true of good heathen as of good Christians. As for bad heathen, they ought not to be punished any worse than bad Christians, and probably would not be if the theological seminaries had not decreed their everlasting misery."

THE following statement has been issued and circulated by the Rev. C. Voysey in connection with the Theistic Church:—

Attention is earnestly requested to the general statement of Religious Views advocated by The Theistic Church.

1. The right and duty of every man to think for himself in matters of religion.
2. The absolute unity of God; involving the denial of the doctrine of the Trinity.
3. The natural humanity of Jesus; involving denial of his miraculous birth and of his having been in any way more than a man.
4. The Fatherhood of God to all mankind, irrespective of race, creed or moral difference; involving the denial of the doctrine of the primeval curse, of the necessity for an atonement, and of all punishment except such as is corrective.
5. The hope of an everlasting life of ever-increasing goodness for every human soul; involving the denial of the doctrine that this life is the only probationary one, and that any one will be condemned to endless torment.
6. The paramount duty of brotherly love, and of practising all virtue uninfluenced by fear of punishment or hope of reward here or

hereafter; involving the denial of the orthodox idea of "Salvation by Faith only," and making Religious Belief entirely dependent on Morality.

7. The supreme authority of man's reason and conscience; involving the denial that God has given to man any Revelation which ought to be accepted without question.

8. The progressive character of our knowledge of God, as of all our other knowledge; involving the denial of finality in Revelation, and declaring it to be incumbent on all men to keep their hearts and minds in constant readiness to receive every fresh ray of light which may lead them to a clearer perception of their duty, their destiny, and their Adorable Creator.

FABLES FROM THE TALMUD.

[From the French of *M. Isidore Weil* in the "*Univers Israelite*."] [1887]

THE DISPUTE

A discussion arose between the straw, the stubble, and the chaff. Each pretended that it was on his account the field had been tilled and sown. In order to appease the uproar, the corn said to them: "Wait until the sheaves are thrashed; we shall then see for which among us the peasant has taken so much time and trouble." When the harvest was taken into the barn the chaff was blown away by the wind and lost, the straw was thrown down and crushed under foot, and the stubble was burned. The grain alone was collected and preserved with care.

Let vanity talk; talent is always recognized, and true merit has its day.

THE RUSTLING OF THE TREES.

The fruit trees were asked: "Why are you so quiet? See your brothers in the forests, how noisy and restless they are!" The trees replied: "We have no reason to fidget and make such a fuss to attract attention; our fruits accomplish that for us."

The most noisy are rarely the most deserving.

THE BLIND AND THE PARALYTIC.

A clever proprietor once confided the care of his garden, which was planted with magnificent

trees, to two men, one of whom was blind and the other paralytic. "These caretakers," said he, "will not despoil my orchard." One day the paralytic man said to his comrade: "Ah! what splendid fruit I see hanging at the top of all these trees! Take me on your back, and we shall be able to reach the branches and gather the fruit." The blind man immediately put himself in position, and hoisted his impotent associate on his back, from which vantage-ground the paralytic man at once proceeded to plunder the beautiful trees. Soon after the proprietor arrived, and speedily perceived the ravages in his garden. "Heavens!" exclaimed he, in a voice of thunder, "who has stolen all my fruit?" "Not I," said the paralytic man, "since I cannot move a single step." "And certainly not I," protested the blind man, "since I cannot see." The proprietor saw through their trick, placed them in the position in which they had committed the robbery, and thrashed them both.

The great Dispenser of Justice acts in the same way towards man. At the last Judgment God re-unites the soul to the body, and renders them conjointly responsible for their actions, the one not being able to act without the assistance of the other. This theory differs from another passage of the Midrash, in which it is taught that the soul commands all the organic functions. As this passage gives us an idea of the physiology of that time, we quote it: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: If a soul shall sin . . ." The soul has ten servants:—The cesophagus causes the food to descend into the stomach; the trachœa is the organ of the voice; the liver is the seat of anger; the absorption of liquids causes the lungs to work; the stomach digests the food; the second stomach (*duodenum*) provokes sleep; the lights, laughter; bile excites envy; the loins are the seat of thought; and the heart that of will and courage. The soul directs all these auxiliaries, and God says to it: "I have placed thee over all this, and yet thou sinnest and robbest for all that!"

CHANCE.

A wild ass bit a man's heel. The man ran

towards the river to bathe his wound, when a boy fell in and was near drowning. The stranger quickly seized him, pulled him out of the water, and deposited him safe and sound on the bank. "Thanks, my benefactor," said the boy, "I owe my life to you." "No, not to me," replied the man, "but to the wild ass. If he had not bitten me, I should not have come to the river."

By a fortuitous chain of circumstances, the misfortune of one is often the happiness of another.

THE TONGUE.

God said to the tongue: "All the precautions that I have taken to prevent thy wickedness have been useless. All men's limbs are upright, but I have made thee lie down; all are externals, but I have placed thee in the interior. I have done more, I have shut thee up between two walls, one of flesh, the other of bone. What could I do more to curb thy venom?"

O perfidious and poisonous tongue! Who can ever arrest it in its doings? It shatters physical, as well as moral obstacles; respect, friendship, shame, and remorse.

A MAN AND HIS TWO WIVES.

A middle-aged man had two wives, one old and the other young. The old one, that he might resemble her in age, pulled out all his black hair and the young one, for the same reason pulled out all the white. They worked at the poor wretch so industriously, that one fine day he found himself with his skull as bare as the palm of one's hand.

Friends, when you marry, take a companion of your own age and condition. Similarity of age is an essential element in conjugal happiness.

WORDS FOR WORKERS—FROM THE POETS.

"Cast all your care on God, that anchor holds."
Tennyson.

"Who counts his brother's welfare
As sacred as his own,
Who loves,—forgives—and pities,
He serveth Me alone."
Whittier.

"The poor man served by thee shall make thee rich,
The sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong.
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense,
For service that thou renderest."

E. Barrett Browning.

"I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes,
A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathise."

Waring.

"Blessed are those who die for God,
And earn the Martyr's crown of light—
Yet he who lives for God may be
A greater conqueror in His sight."

A. A. Proctor.

"Nor deem the irrecoverable past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks at last,
To something nobler we attain."

Longfellow.

"It was only a verse said softly
To one who seemed in pain,
But God's ways are higher than ours,
And it never was lost again."

"Thou com'st not to thy place by accident
It is the very place God meant for thee."

Archbishop Trench.

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way,
But to act that each to-morrow
Find us further than to-day."

Longfellow.

"Rise from your dreams of the future,
Of gaining some hard-fought field:
Of storming some airy fortress:
Of bidding some giant yield:
Your future has deeds of glory,
Of honour (God grant it may),
But your arm will never be stronger,
Or the need as great as to-day."

A. A. Proctor.

"NOT AS I WILL."

ONE of the greatest lessons taught to the world by Jesus of Nazareth is that of submission to the Divine will. Call him God, or call him man, the value of the lesson is the same. Like the rest of us, he had his tastes, his preferences, his longings. Had nothing else interposed, he would doubtless have chosen his own path as clearly and distinctly as ever did the most self-willed man in the world. It is easy to see that he was a man of strong, resolute will. He knew what he wanted, and he could turn his steps in the way to gain it. But a new factor, powerful and constraining, came into play, and acted as a controlling influence. That factor was the Divine will. He at once and finally admitted the supremacy of this will, and tutored his own nature into full submission. No nobler episode in the life of humanity can be found than that in Gethsemane. There the strong human nature, with its yearning for life, for victory, for success, was face to face with the iron necessity of the will of God, which seemed distinctly to point out as the true path that which led to death, defeat, and failure. There is a tragic power seen in the pleading of the soul. Face to face with the reality there is the agony of an intense and overmastering struggle. The whole world for ages has turned back to gaze upon that silent battle-field, and has never failed to see that it dwarfs into insignificance every blood-stained battlefield of history. It was man and God at distinct and deliberate issue. When man and God are thus at issue, there is never a doubt as to the result. But force alone gains no great victory. Of course strength must reign. Power ever rules. But mere force wins few laurels. If God simply crushed the life and coerced the will of man, it would be the rulership of despotism, and would win no love and promote no moral growth. The issue in Gethsemane was brought about not by the pressure of resistless force, but by the full and reverent conquest of all the fastnesses of the soul. Jesus saw that God's will was best. How it would promote his own great desires and his life-work he did not know. What it would do for him he could not tell. Clearly the immediate result would

be altogether different from what he had desired and hoped. And yet, as the will of God became clear to his own soul, so clear that no room was left for mistake, he turned all his powers upon himself and won his supreme victory. When he said, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt," he was at the supremest moment of his life, and gained his greatest triumph. Though it led him into suffering and death, it wrought out his own perfect union with God, and it taught the divinest of lessons to the world.

For union with God can only be found by full acquiescence with him; not the obedience of slaves that must submit, and that is afraid of the taskmaster's whip, but the joyful concurrence in His will as the best and noblest thing for one's self and for the world. But to reach such a result is certainly no easy and everyday task. Every soul that reaches it has its Gethsemane. The conflict must take place, and the agony of it cannot be avoided. Our whole life is a struggle between our own desires and wishes and the inevitable and inexorable laws which are around us, and which we cannot escape. We often foolishly and frantically, like birds in a cage, beat against the bars of necessity, and wound and maim ourselves in consequence; but our efforts are utterly futile, and we only learn our lesson when we are weak and crushed, our wings broken, and our hearts wildly beating. Over and over again the vain conflict is renewed, always with the same result. We blunder along in our folly, and we go on resolutely, as if we believed that our perseverance would be rewarded and that the victory would be ours. It never is. God must rule. His laws must be carried out, even though as they grind along they grind us under them. Call this hard, stern necessity if we will, say it is a tremendous and resistless fatalism, cry out that we are imprisoned in adamant walls—use any terms we will, but the obvious and eternal fact will remain that law reigns and will reign, and that no prayers, entreaties, sacrifices, or frantic outbursts of passion will in the slightest degree effect any change. By degrees we learn this lesson. We cannot get out of our natural boundaries. Just as our bodies hold us in bondage to space and will

not let us go, so the laws of the universe encompass us and will not let us escape. If our own wills and desires fit in with the eternal law all is well, and we find joy and peace. If not, we but vainly struggle, and must at last submit.

Jesus learned this lesson fully, and found out the sweetness and beauty of it. He discovered that whatever is inevitable is beautiful; that all law is beneficent; and that the Divine will is always for the good of the world. And every other great soul in history has found out the same reality. Passing through its tragic Gethsemane, it has ascended the transfiguration mount.

Our own lives are luminous with the same experience. Desire has grown up within us; hopes have blossomed; plans have been matured; we have resolutely marked out our path; but the way has not been smooth. We could not go on as we wished: obstacles have arisen. On every side the walls of necessity have appeared in granite strength, and we could neither pierce nor climb them. Other human wills have opposed themselves to ours. New forces revealed themselves we had not counted upon; and gradually we were made to feel that one by one our plans and schemes were brought to nought, and a power was working in opposition to us which could not be subdued. Then, at times, we were angry, fretful, and rebellious. We went on in a hard, blindfolded, dogged way, resolved to gain our point at any cost. And many a period of our lives has been marked by grim, painful episodes which tell of our sad defeats and our woful sufferings. We were fighting against God, and could not help being defeated. At first, perhaps, we did not see this, and thought we were only proving ourselves resolute, and were nobly trying to control dead circumstances and vanquish forces obstinate and masterful, but yet inferior to ourselves. But gradually there was forced upon us the conviction that we were opposed to powers mightier than ourselves, and that however we bruised and maimed ourselves we must finally give way.

When this moment of experience was reached, we were at once brought up before the great crisis of our lives. We were like

soldiers who had been making their way through an unknown territory, passing through defiles and swamps, and forcing their way through shrub and forest until, all at once, there bursts before their gaze the embattled hosts of their foes drawn up in powerful array and ready for the dread issue of decisive battle. So when the conviction forces itself upon our minds that we are not fighting against human principalities and powers, or against any agencies like ourselves—changeable and transient—but against the living God Himself, speaking in Divine law and manifesting Himself in absolute necessity, we have reached the Gethsemane of our history, and must solve the deepest problem of our lives.

Taking the very lowest point of view, what can we do? We are not strong enough to gain a victory—we must be vanquished. Supposing for the moment that our aims are the best; that our plans are the wisest; that, as a distinguished surgeon said to me the other day, undoubtedly nature has blundered, and we could have done better; supposing all this, yet of what use is it? Here we are face to face with overwhelming force. We cannot fight it. We cannot carry our plans. We cannot alter nature. Blunder or not she is omnipotent, and our efforts to subdue her are utterly futile. Why bruise ourselves in the wild conflict? Why waste our strength in the mad enterprise? We may as well submit and cry out that we are defeated. I know we do not always do so. Self-willed and stubborn, we plunge on like wild horses; we wound ourselves in vain and frantic efforts; our stormy cries go up into space when even the echoes are dead; and at length we, angry, irritated and vengeful, lie down defeated and defiant. Of what good is it all? we are in presence of a force that renders our poor efforts powerless. Submission is a necessity; we must give way.

But if we look at this power which now confronts us, and take knowledge, not simply of its irresistibility, but of its nature and tendency, we shall be better able to put ourselves into a true relationship with it. Suppose that in looking closely at it we see not only how strong it is, but find out how beneficent it is; how it

works for good; how it masters all things in order to bring about good results; how the very health and life of the world are dependent upon its victorious career; that were it to fail all would suffer, and the machinery of the world go wrong and everything be in confusion; supposing we began to see the hard lines of the face of necessity softening into the tender graces of love, and to discover that behind the ceaselessly working law there was a tender and loving Lawgiver who gazed upon us with unutterable love, and yearned towards us with the tenderness of a divine father, how altered our feelings would become, and with how much more readiness should we submit to the inevitable. Not even then would our way become smooth. Our own plans and hopes would have to disappear—not our will would rule. The path along which we should have to go would most likely be thorny and ragged enough; our feet would be wounded, and our strength fade away from us; nay, even sharper and sterner paths might open out before us; we might have to lose all we value most; our loved ones be snatched away from us; our valued possessions be torn from our hands; our strength might be reduced to weakness and we made dependent like children upon those around us; all this might be, and yet our submission be not only required but proved to be the very best for our peace and joy. But if we could only find out that inexorable law was boundless love, that necessity was God, and that the unalterable decrees of nature are the title deeds of happiness, our battle scene in Gethsemane, however sharp and painful it might be, would speedily become the scene of our divinest triumph. It is not given to us to see all this at once. Only gradually do the unveilings of God come to us. Ofttimes we have to submit to His will without knowing in any way the why and the wherefore. No doubt we can turn back to the experience of unnumbered souls in all ages and find that darkness was followed by light, that submission brought peace, that obedience led freedom, and this should help us. The joyful testimony of our noblest would enable us to see that those who trusted most gained most; that submission to God's will meant the highest

joy, and that the working of His laws yielded the most beneficent results. But still we should be face to face with this issue—*Our* will, *God's* will. It is a sharp experience when we learn that we must submit; but the sting is taken out of it if we can say, "His will is best." The agony is supreme until the moment of divine submission comes and then it is over, and a divine peace comes. I can well imagine the thick darkness that encompassed the soul of Jesus in that garden outside Jerusalem, but I can also form some conception of the flood of light which burst in upon Him when he had said with all his soul, "Thy will be done."

Now submission is a necessity. We are not masters in this world. We cannot shape its affairs according to our will. Try as best we may, we shall always find there is a power that shapes our end; that a master force takes possession of us and guides us at its pleasure; that the current bears us on resistlessly; that the tides of life carry us with them; and that we must obey. No doubt there is a province within which we can exercise our own will; but outside that, and that means in all the greatest regions of our lives, we do not control, but are controlled. What should be our attitude towards this stupendous fact of our experience? Shall we be like foolish and fretful children who cry out in the night? Shall we be like stubborn and senseless animals that blindly rush on to their own destruction? Shall we act like cold, hard fatalists, who sternly bow before the inevitable, and accept it as an overmastering foe? Or shall we look the laws of nature frankly in the face; stand out in a noble and earnest spirit before the sweeping chariot of necessity; and see in the inevitable the working of a will that cannot err, and of a love that cannot fail?

If we can only trust in God; put our hands in His, and go willingly where He leads; submit to Him, feeling sure that His will is the best; give up our own plans, having no doubt the great Master-builder is working by those that are better and complete; and recognize in all that is done the wisdom and tenderness of a loving Father, our Gethsemane will have brought us into a region of wondrous light, and

opened for us the doors of the kingdom of God.

But I cannot express myself half so well as an unknown writer has done in some words I copied out of a book while I was at sea:—

Blindfolded and alone I stand,
With unknown threshold on each hand;
The darkness deepens as I grope,
Afraid to hear, afraid to hope;
Yet this one thing I learn to know,
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted, or are laid,
By some great Law, unseen and still,
Unfathomed purpose to fulfil,
Not as I will.

Blindfolded and alone I wait,
Loss seems too bitter, gain too late;
Too heavy burdens in the load,
And too few helpers on the road;
And joy is weak, and grief is strong,
And years and days so long, so long;
Yet this one thing I learn to know,
Each day more surely, as I go,
That I am glad the good and ill
By changeless Law are ordered still,
Not as I will.

"Not as I will;" the sound grows sweet
Each time my lips the words repeat,
"Not as I will;" the darkness feels
More soft than light when this thought steals
Like whispered voice, to calm and bless
All unrest and all loneliness.
"Not as I will;" because the one
Who loved us first and best is gone
Before us on the road, and still
For us must all his love fulfil;
Not as I will.

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